

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0077
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 10947

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, XF, IS
SUBJECT: HEIGHTENED DISCONTENT OVER BEGIN'S PLAN

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 10753 (B) TEL AVIV 10830

1. SUMMARY: ISRAELIS ARE RESENTFUL OVER BEGIN'S
REVEALING HIS PLAN IN WASHINGTON BEFORE EXPLAINING
IT IN ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH GENERALLY CONFUSED ABOUT
THE DETAILS, EMOTIONS RANGING FROM CONSTERNATION TO
REDICULE HAVE ARESEN AMONG POLITICIANS ON THE BASIS
OF MEDIA REPORTS OF THE PLAN'S PROVISIONS. MANY MKS,
IRRESPECTIVE OF PARTY, FEAR THE PLAN'S END RESULT WOULD
BE A PALESTINAIN STATE AND SOME EXPRESS AMAZEMENT AT
BEGIN'S TURN-ABOUT AND WHAT THEY VIEW AS HIS NAIVETE.
END SUMMARY.

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2. BEGIN'S RETURN LAST NIGHT WAS TO AN ISRAEL CON-
FUSED AND UNEASY OVER HIS PEACE PLAN. THESE SENTIMENTS
HAVE SPRING UP SINCE BEGIN'S SURPRISE DEPARTURE FOR
WASHINGTON ON DECEMBER 14 AND EXIST SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE
CONTINUED OPTIMISM AND HOPE THAT TRUE PEACE IS IN THE OFFING.
3. FIRST AND FOREMOST, ISRAELIS ARE RESENTFUL THAT SO
LITTLE HAS BEEN REVEALED TO THEM ABOUT THE PLAN. THERE

IS CONSIDERABLE CHAGRIN (WE SUSPECT MORE INTENSE AMONG POLITICIANS AND THE PRESS THAN AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC) THAT BEGIN HAS CONFIDED HIS PLAN TO U.S. SENATORS AND THE AMERICAN TV PUBLIC BEFORE PRESENTING IT TO HIS OWN PEOPLE. THE RESENTMENT IS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN THE KNESSET, WHERE LIKUD MKS ARE ANNOYED AND (AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF SOME SENIOR PERSONALITIES) EMBARRASSED AT THEIR HAVING TO RELY ON NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS FOR THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF BEGIN'S PLAN. ALIGNMENT MKS ARE FREER IN EXPRESSING DISMAY AT HAVING TO WAIT FOR BEGIN'S RETURN BEFORE PRESS DETAILS OF HIS PROPOSALS CAN BE CONFIRMED OR CLARIFIED, EVEN WHILE AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PASS JUDGMENT ON ITS MERITS AND ACCEPTABILITY.

4. THE CONFUSION RESULTING FOR THE VAGUE, APPARENTLY INCOMPLETE, AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY REPORTS OF THE PLAN'S PROVISIONS HAVE UNDERMINED MEANINGFUL DEBATE AND HAVE FOSTERED FANCIFUL THEORIES OF BEGIN'S TRUE INTENTIONS. IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT BEGIN BRIEFED THE MINISTRIAL COMMITTEE ON SECURITY ON THE PLAN'S GENERAL OUTLINE BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE US AND RECEIVED ITS ASSENT, ALTHOUGH ARIK SHARON REPORTEDLY WITHHELD HIS APPROVAL. THE COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN TIGHT-LIPPED ABOUT WHAT THEY KNOW, MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN OF THEIR PARTY AND KNESSET COLLEAGUES.

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5. WHAT IS KNOWN ON THE BASIS OF MEDIA REPORTING HAS GENERATED STRONG EMOTIONS, WHICH FOR THE MOMENT ARE BEING HELD IN PARTIAL CHECK PENDING REVELATION OF THE DETAILS BY BEGIN. REACTION WITHIN HERUT RANGES FROM BLIND FAITH IN BEGIN AND THE ASSUMPTION THAT WHAT THEY HEAR OF THE PLAN ARE DISTORTIONS OR MISINTERPRETATIONS, TO CONSTERNATION AT BEGIN'S ALLEGED TURN-ABOUT. DMC REACTION IS ALSO MIXED; AMNON RUBENSTEIN IS IN GENERAL ACCORD WITH BEGIN'S PROPOSALS AND IS OPTIMISTIC ON THE PROSPECT OF PEACE. AKIVA NOF VOICES DISGUST AT BEGIN'S HIGH-HANDEDNESS AND EXPRESSES FEAR THAT THE END RESULT OF BEGIN'S PLAN FOR THE WEST BANK WILL BE A PALESTINIAN STATE.

6. THE LATTER POINT HAS BEEN A CONSTANT REFRAIN AMONG ALIGNMENT MKS THE LAST TWO DAYS. OVERLOOKING THE IRONY OF THEIR CRITICISM OF BEGIN FROM THE RIGHT, SEVERAL HAVE SAID TO US THAT BEGIN HAS PROVEN HIMSELF A POLITICAL AMATEUR, WHO APPARENTLY HAS NOT THOUGHT OUT THE RAMIFICATIONS OF HIS PROPOSALS. LABOR MK YITZHAK NAVON SAW IN BEGIN'S IDEA OF GIVING WEST BANK ARABS THE OPTION OF ISRAELI OR JORDANIAN CITIZENSHIP AMAZING NAIVETE. NAVON POINTED OUT THAT AFTER CHOOSING ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP, WEST BANKERS,

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PLO, COULD SWAMP THE KNESSET BY THEIR VOTES. SOME MAPAM AND LABOR MKS (E.G., UZI BAR AM) ARE GLEEFUL AT BEGIN'S NEW MODERATION AND REGARD IT AS A REPUDIATION OF THE LIKUD PLATFORM AND WHAT BEGIN HAD HERETOFORE STOOD FOR. HOWEVER, MOST ALIGNMENT STALWARTS INCLUDING MAPAMNIKS, AGREE WITH THE CRITICISM OF PERES AND RABIN THAT BEGIN'S PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST BANK WOULD SOW THE SEEDS OF AN INDEPENDENT WEST BANK STATE.

7. THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT THINK THAT PEACE IS AT HAND--WHO BELIEVE THAT BEGIN IS PLAY ACTING AND MANIPULATING WORLD OPINION. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THESE FEW (AND THEY ARE A SMALL MINORITY) ARE FOUND ON BOTH THE FAR LEFT AND THE FAR RIGHT. THE SPOKESMAN AND PARLIAMENTARY
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SECRETARY FOR SHELLI BELIEVES BEGIN IS REALLY FOOT-DRAGGING AND HAS NO INTENTION OF YIELDING ANYTHING ON THE WEST BANK. HE MAINTAINS THAT ONLY THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WILL AVERT ANOTHER WAR. SAYING MUCH THE SAME THING, BUT WITH LITTLE REMORSE, IS A HATZOFEH JOURNALIST WHO SUPPORTS GUSH EMUNIM. HE SAYS BEGIN IS USING WORDS LIKE "AUTONOMY" AND "SELF-DETERMINATION" AS PUBLIC RELATIONS GIMMICK. THE FORMER IRGUN COMMANDER AND HERUT CHIEFTAIN WOULD NEVER ALIENATE TERRITORY OF ERETZ YISRAEL. FURTHERMORE, THE JOURNALIST BELIEVES SADAT MEANS IT WHEN HE INSISTS ON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND A PALESTINIAN STATE. THE RESULT: THE PEACE TALKS WILL SOON BREAK DOWN AND THINGS WILL RETURN TO WHAT IS NORMAL IN THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT.
VIETS

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